

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of this application as presently amended and in light of the following discussion is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-11 are pending in the present application with Claims 8 and 9 withdrawn from consideration. Claims 1-3, 5-7, and 10-11 are amended by the present amendment.

In the outstanding Office Action, Claim 5 was objected to; Claims 1-3, 10, and 11 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by Murata et al. (European Patent Application Publication EP 0955665, herein "Murata"); Claims 4 and 5 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Murata in view of Yamakoshi et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,417,079, herein "Yamakoshi"); and Claims 6 and 7 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Murata, Yamakoshi, and Himori et al. (U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2002/0134508, herein "Himori").

Regarding the objection to Claim 5, Claim 5 has been amended as suggested by the outstanding Office Action. No new matter has been added. Accordingly, it is respectfully requested this objection be withdrawn.

Regarding the rejections of the claims on the merits, independent Claims 1, 2, 10, and 11 have been amended to recite that a device is configured to vary over time a phase difference between streams of high-frequency electric power, which have the same frequency, and are supplied from a plurality of high-frequency electric power feeding circuits. The claims amendments find support in the originally filed specification, for example in paragraph [0060], [0062], [0083], [0086], and [0098] of the published specification. No new matter has been added.

Briefly recapitulating, amended Claim 1 is directed to an apparatus for plasma processing with high-frequency electric power generated by a plurality of high-frequency electric power feeding circuits. The apparatus includes, *inter alia*, a device configured to

vary over time a phase difference between streams of the high-frequency electric power, which have the same frequency, and are supplied from the plurality of the high-frequency electric power feeding circuits, respectively. Independent Claims 2, 10, and 11 were amended similar to Claim 1.

In a non-limiting example, Figure 1 shows the plurality of high-frequency electric power feeding circuits 11a and 11b, and a device (21 and 22 in Figure 2) that varies over time the phase difference between streams of the high-frequency electric power.

Turning to the applied art, Murata shows in Figure 1 a plasma chemical vapor deposition apparatus that has a plurality of electrodes 32 connected by power wires 41 and 43 to a power source 36. A power distributor 60 is placed between the power source 36 and the power wires 41 and 43 to distribute a high-frequency electric power received from the power source 36 to two output terminals and two additional four-way distributing power distributors 63 and 64. Further, Murata discloses that impedance converters 61 are formed between the power distributor 60 and the power wirings 43.

However, Murata does not teach or suggest a device configured to **vary over time a phase difference** between streams of the high-frequency electric power, which have the same frequency, and are supplied from a plurality of the high-frequency electric power feeding circuits, as required by amended Claims 1, 2, 10, and 11.

Independent Claims 10 and 11 further recite that a film is formed on a substrate such that a distribution of a thickness of the film is made uniform over the entirety of the substrate. Murata is silent about this feature.

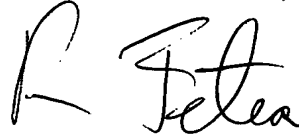
The outstanding Office Action relies on Yamakoshi for teaching an impedance changer 413 and on Himori for teaching a change in a cable length of a branch cable 132. However, neither of these references cures the deficiencies of Murata disclosed above in regard with independent Claim 1.

Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that independent Claims 1, 2, 10, and 11 and each of the claims depending therefrom patentably distinguish over Murata, Yamakoshi, and Himori, either alone or in combination.

Consequently, in light of the above discussion and in view of the present amendment, the present application is believed to be in condition for allowance and an early and favorable action to that effect is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

OBLON, SPIVAK, McCLELLAND,
MAIER & NEUSTADT, P.C.



Gregory J. Maier
Attorney of Record
Registration No. 25,599

Customer Number
22850

Tel: (703) 413-3000
Fax: (703) 413 -2220
(OSMMN 08/07)

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Remus F. Fetea, Ph.D.
Registration No. 59,140